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Chairman:	Mr. Butagira	(Uganda)
later:	Mr. Anshar (Vice-Chairman)	(Indonesia)
later:	Mr. Butagira (Chairman)	(Uganda)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 64: Advancement of women (A/60/38, A/60/111, A/60/137, A/60/137/Corr.1, A/60/165, A/60/206, A/60/211, A/60/274, A/60/281, A/60/372, A/60/62-E/2005/10, A/60/79 and A/60/371)

Agenda item 65: Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" (A/60/170, A/60/111, A/60/211 and A/60/371)

1. **Ms. Mayanja** (Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) said that the current session was taking place against the backdrop of the historic consensus on gender equality and the empowerment of women reached at the 2005 World Summit, the decisions taken at the Economic and Social Council's substantive session of 2005, the Secretary-General's report "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005) and the Review and Appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Outcome Document of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (Beijing+10), held at the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2005. It was very encouraging that the Declaration issued at that session and the 2005 World Summit Outcome (A/60/L.1) both reaffirmed the importance of full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The latter also reaffirmed the importance of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. That consensus must now be translated into reality and added to the past five-year gains.

2. She recalled that world leaders had resolved to eliminate pervasive gender discrimination through a variety of measures (2005 World Summit Outcome, para. 58), and noted that progress had been made, particularly in establishing national machinery, national gender equality policies and strategies. Advances had also been made in women's participation in the economy, women's life expectancy, education for women and girls, awareness of the impact of HIV/AIDS, recognition of women's role in peace and security, mechanisms to promote women's rights and women's public sector participation. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had now been ratified or acceded to by 180 States, most recently the United Arab Emirates and Monaco.

3. At the beginning of the current session, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs had placed gender and social issues within the broader priority concern of the global rise of inequality, which was at the core of many of the issues addressed by the Committee. In particular, women's limited access to economic and non-economic opportunities was often at the root of their lower status in many societies. The need to eliminate such inequalities and ensure that women did not bear the brunt of the negative effects of globalization was perhaps the primary challenge in the period beyond Beijing+10.

4. Despite the global decline in absolute poverty, the goal of redressing disproportionately high poverty levels among women and their insufficient access to economic resources remained elusive. The Millennium Project report made a strong case for integrating the empowerment of women into national strategies. Violence against women and girls was another challenge requiring the Committee's immediate attention. At least one out of every three women worldwide had been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Abuse of women was increasingly becoming one of the top priorities of intergovernmental bodies, United Nations entities, Governments and civil society.

5. The Secretary-General's study on violence against women, due to be submitted at the sixty-first session, was expected to help bring the issue to the attention of decision-makers at the highest level, while matching policy pronouncements by action and resources. A campaign to combat sexual violence and abuse against women in situations of armed conflict was to mark the five-year anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Women's role as peacemaker and peacebuilder needed to be expanded. The anniversary would be used to stress women's important role in the peace process, in response to the commitment made at the 2005 World Summit. In particular, the Organization would outline United Nations system-wide action on implementation of the resolution to the Security Council, while the Secretary-General's related report would make a number of

recommendations to enhance accountability in that regard.

6. The political empowerment of women had been advanced in the past five years with a rise in the over 2 per cent proportion of women in parliaments around the world and, as at 2005, seven developing countries ranked among the 17 top performers. In 2004, 49 of the 58 countries holding lower house elections had witnessed an increase in the percentage of women. On the other hand, the trend towards a low representation of women in political and public life continued. In most countries, de facto equality between women and men in political participation was yet to be achieved. For example, only six of the 155 Heads of State and Government attending the 2005 World Summit had been women.

7. Both the 2005 World Summit Outcome and Beijing+10 had demonstrated that gender mainstreaming as a tool for promoting gender equality was increasingly showing results. The Committee's work offered an opportunity to further advance gender equality and women's empowerment, including mapping the road to accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and 2005 World Summit Outcome, setting in motion a consultation process on strengthening linkages between policymaking and needs on the ground, building partnerships and making the Organization's activities more responsive to women's needs. The Committee's contribution was to ensure that the decisions of Beijing+10 were fully integrated into the work of other Committees. She looked forward to the future work of the Commission on the Status of Women in reshaping the United Nations so that it could make a real difference to women's lives. In line with the 2005 World Summit Outcome, there would be a review of mandates, including those covering gender issues.

8. **Ms. Hannan** (Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women), speaking first under agenda item 64, introduced the Secretary-General's report on violence against women migrant workers (A/60/137 and Corr.1). The report, which would be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, showed that violence against women migrant workers remained an issue of concern and emphasized the need for Member States to ratify international instruments on migration, particularly the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two Protocols, and all relevant International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions.

9. The report highlighted the context, value added, goals and scope of the study and gave an overview of ongoing and planned preparatory activities, in particular efforts to ensure the active participation of all stakeholders in the process. As stated in the report (para. 25), the highly consultative preparatory process was critical to create the momentum necessary to achieve effective follow-up to and implementation of the recommendations which the study would be proposing. To that end, further consultations would be organized to facilitate an exchange of views by all interested stakeholders in the coming months.

10. The Secretary-General's report on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (A/60/165) focused on the empowerment of rural women and outlined activities carried out by the United Nations system to improve their situation. It illustrated that the process of globalization had direct and indirect effects on the empowerment of rural women, both positive and negative (para. 62), and offered recommendations to strengthen the positive effects of globalization (para. 65), building on the framework provided by the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

11. The Secretary-General's report on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/60/206) and the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/60/38) played a crucial role in championing women's equality that went well beyond the absence of discriminatory legislation. She drew particular attention to the Committee's request for an extension of its meeting time, which was essential if it was to continue to be an effective accountability mechanism for women's human rights. She also highlighted the relationship between the Convention and policy processes and instruments within the intergovernmental framework, particularly linkages between implementation of the Convention and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in constructive dialogue with reporting States. The Committee's contribution to Beijing+10 had been an important step forward in intensifying attention to the Convention and States Parties' obligations in intergovernmental processes. In

that context, her Division continued to provide technical assistance to enhance the capacity of States parties to prepare reports under article 18 of the Convention.

12. She introduced the report of the Secretary-General on measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/60/170) (agenda item 65), which reviewed steps taken to promote gender equality through gender mainstreaming, reviewed outcomes of major events, assessed the extent to which the Secretary-General's reports and Assembly resolutions had taken gender perspectives into account particularly in the context of preparations for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society to be held in Tunis in November 2005. The report also recommended integrating gender perspectives in reports and resolutions, monitoring implementation of recommendations, fully integrating gender perspectives in all stages of the World Summit on the Information Society, and ensuring gender mainstreaming in the implementation of and follow-up to other major international conferences and summits, in particular in the context of the 2005 World Summit.

13. She noted also that the Secretary-General's report on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (A/60/165) recommended that the Summit should address rural women's priorities and needs and ensure their participation in developing and implementing information and communication technology (ICT) activities at the national and local levels. In that context, her Division ran a project to enhance the capacity of national machinery for the advancement of women in Africa to use ICT to achieve their goals. A panel on national implementation and ICT would also be organized during the World Summit on the Information Society.

14. The next session of the Commission on the Status of Women provided a unique opportunity to identify the key issues for follow-up to Beijing+10 in the context of its new multi-year programme of work beginning 2007. The ten-year review, near-universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the impetus provided for gender equality in the 2005 World Summit Outcome should visibly enhance progress in the year ahead. The Committee played a critical role in implementing what had already been agreed, by ensuring the political will and accountability that would translate commitments into action.

15. **Ms. Heyzer** (Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)), speaking under agenda item 64 only, said that, as illustrated by the Secretary-General's note on the activities of UNIFEM (A/60/274), the vision of a world free of want and fear depended upon gender equality and human rights being placed at the centre of human development and human security. The Beijing Platform for Action provided an essential pathway towards implementing that vision. In 2004, UNIFEM had concentrated on helping countries move forward on that pathway, bringing women's human rights into the development agenda and national strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The report documented progress made in reducing poverty, ending violence against women, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and promoting gender equality in democratic governance and post-conflict countries. In all those areas, UNIFEM had pursued an integrated approach, supporting laws and policies to promote women's human rights, helping institutions allocate resources and establish accountability mechanisms to make such laws and policies meaningful, strengthening gender advocates and changing harmful attitudes that perpetuated gender inequality around the world.

16. In its work on women's economic security, the Fund had concentrated on incorporating gender into poverty reduction strategies, helping Governments collect and analyse data and national and local government organizations shape options for migrant women, and building new partnerships with the private sector and the media. Its work on gender equality in democratic governance and post-conflict situations also reflected a holistic approach, supporting women's civil rights, political participation and leadership capacity in post-conflict reconstruction, for example in Afghanistan. Women's leadership was also a critical part of ongoing peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict countries, for example in the Great Lakes region, while in Peru gender had been successfully integrated into the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a model that was now being replicated elsewhere.

17. The Fund's work on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women illustrated the same

integrated approach: building the capacity of Governments and women's groups to bring about change by creating stronger frameworks for gender equality, increasing the effectiveness of implementation, monitoring and reporting, and developing partnerships at the local and national levels. The Fund worked with institutions in over 20 countries to implement the Convention, including through regional programmes in South East Asia and the Arab States.

18. The Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women, established by General Assembly resolution 50/166, now focused specifically on implementation of existing laws and policies to address the multiple forms of violence that women faced both during conflict and in times of peace. Strategies included awareness-raising campaigns, capacity-building for judicial, law enforcement, health and other officials, creation of data collection systems and indicators to monitor implementation. In 2005, the Trust Fund was focusing on linking gender violence to HIV/AIDS, for which it had for the first time secured private sector support.

19. Such examples showed that the realities of poverty, violence and discrimination marking the everyday lives of too many women could be changed. Strategies were successful because they worked at different levels and across different sectors. The international community's efforts on the Millennium Development Goals provided an opportunity to expand strategies, apply good practices more broadly and leverage change in women's lives. The High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Paris earlier in the year had represented a major shift in the relationship between programme and donor countries and the way in which development was funded and implemented. The aid effectiveness agenda was becoming a blueprint for donors and partners to implement on the basis of strong national ownership and responsibility. As United Nations efforts to strengthen national capacity to implement and manage national planning and development processes got under way, gender equality and strategies to achieve it must be incorporated into all coordination mechanisms. National plans for gender equality and national strategies to end violence against women must be made part of the aid effectiveness agenda.

20. In November, UNIFEM and the European Commission would co-host a conference in Brussels entitled "The Changing Development Architecture and Gender Equality", the objective of which was to ensure that gender equality and women's rights were strengthened in the framework of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction strategy papers. The affirmation of the centrality of gender equality to human rights, human development and human security had provided new momentum to the journey towards gender equality. That momentum must not be lost. In that regard, the international community must strengthen the institutional architecture of gender equality in order to more effectively institutionalize commitments, improve coherence and the focus on gender within country-level coordinating mechanisms, align gender equality measures in order to give countries a single, clear set of benchmarks, draw upon the wealth of technical expertise and knowledge amassed by UNIFEM, and commit the resources needed to apply strategies broadly, particularly in the poorest countries. If long-term and sustainable solutions were to be found to the challenges identified by world leaders, it was essential to empower women — one half of the world's population — to contribute their knowledge and insights to the process.

21. **Ms. Azarias** (Director, Internal Audit Division I, Office of Internal Oversight Services), introducing the Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the audit of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) (A/60/281), noted that the working group on the future operation of INSTRAW and the General Assembly had rejected the recommendation made by OIOS in its previous report (A/56/907) to the effect that consideration should be given to the option of closing INSTRAW. The current report therefore focused on issues relating to the sustainability of INSTRAW.

22. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) had found that many entities in the United Nations system overlapped with INSTRAW. Also, some entities had developed information and communication technology tools to promote networking, thus competing with the Gender Awareness Information Networking System set up by INSTRAW. In the opinion of OIOS, United Nations system-wide coordination for the promotion of gender equality was the main mechanism through which INSTRAW could develop strong linkages with other United Nations entities and attain its programmatic objectives. However, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and

Advancement of Women, who chaired a system-wide Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality of which INSTRAW was a member, was not given sufficient formal authority for coordinating the programmes of Network members.

23. Although the working group on the future operation of INSTRAW had recommended abolishing the Institute's autonomous status, that step was not reflected in the revised INSTRAW statute approved by Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/57. The Institute's reliance on United Nations regular budget funding for most of its core requirements had been increasing. However, the recommendation by OIOS to consider improvements to the Institute's Board of Trustees had been implemented, and the former Board of Trustees had been reconstituted and integrated in the current Executive Board.

24. With regard to the Institute's programme of work, OIOS had found that outputs in 2004 had been generally limited to interim documents or updated materials. A training strategy had not been implemented, and website management should be improved.

25. The recommendation made by OIOS in its previous report, to the effect that the Secretary-General should spell out the roles and responsibilities of his Special Representative for INSTRAW, had not been implemented. Therefore, OIOS was recommending that the Secretary-General should propose to the Economic and Social Council that it assign a supervisory administrative role to the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs or the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

26. **Ms. Manalo** (Chairperson, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) said that at its thirty-second and thirty-third sessions, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had considered the reports of 16 States parties, namely, Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Croatia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Gabon, Gambia, Guyana, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Paraguay, Samoa and Turkey. Many predominantly national non-governmental organizations had also submitted information to the Committee. For the first time information had been received from a national human rights institution.

27. She trusted that all 16 reporting States were actively engaged in follow-up to the concluding comments, and that NGOs were doing their best to ensure that systematic action was being taken to implement the Committee's recommendations. She also encouraged the entities of the United Nations system that were active in the 16 reporting countries to support the efforts of governments and NGOs.

28. Among the Committee's milestone outputs in the past year had been its work under the Optional Protocol. Notably, the Committee had adopted its views on the merits of communication 2/2003, *A.T. v Hungary*, a case involving domestic violence. She wished to express the Committee's appreciation to States parties for cooperating with the Committee in the examination of communications and implementation of the inquiry procedure. She encouraged all States parties to disseminate information about the procedures, as called for in article 13 of the Optional Protocol.

29. In its continued effort to enhance its methods of work, the Committee prepared lists of issues and questions for initial as well as periodic reports. Only two meetings per State party were allocated for the constructive dialogue. Guidelines had been issued on the length of reports and of written responses, so as to limit the volume of documentation. The Committee had started to use country task forces for the constructive dialogue. It had taken steps to monitor implementation of the Convention in States whose reports were significantly overdue. She wished to thank both Cape Verde and Saint Lucia which, at the Committee's invitation, had submitted all their overdue reports as combined reports in time for consideration in 2006.

30. The Committee had stated its views on the advisability of appointing a Special Rapporteur on laws that discriminated against women. It had also discussed the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women. It had held a preliminary discussion on the plan of action of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and looked forward to meeting her personally in January 2006. The Committee had also made a significant contribution to and played a very active role in the efforts to further harmonize reporting procedures within the framework of the inter-committee meeting and the chairpersons meeting.

31. On the subject of the Committee's request for extension of meeting time, she stressed that the Committee had streamlined the manner in which it considered reports. However, the significant effort that States, as well as NGOs, invested in the reporting process could not be reduced further if it was to remain meaningful. There was an urgent need to find a long-term solution that would allow the Committee to implement its responsibilities under the Convention and its Optional Protocol in an effective and timely manner, as well as place it on an equal footing with other human rights treaty bodies in regard to meeting time. Accordingly, the Committee had requested authorization for a third annual session of three weeks. It had also requested authorization, as a temporary measure for 2006 and 2007, to meet in parallel working groups to address the backlog of reports awaiting consideration.

32. **Ms. Moreno** (Director, United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)) said that the Institute's pioneering research on the gender dimensions of remittance flows had demonstrated the significant transformative potential of women's migration and economic empowerment for household gender relations, community well-being and economic growth. Policies and projects that facilitated the development impact of remittances must be analysed. As half of remittance senders and the majority of remittance recipients, women were playing a central role in managing and distributing such income. Projects aimed at maximizing the potential of remittances must include women, and they needed access to financial management and investment, credit, training in microenterprise management and other resources.

33. As documented or undocumented migrants, women were exposed to insecurities and exploitation that jeopardized their economic, social and personal well-being. The Institute looked forward to the General Assembly's high-level dialogue on international migration and development in 2006 and expected that gender issues would be at the forefront of the discussion. As the primary agent behind the protection and promotion of human rights, the United Nations had a responsibility to ensure that the rights of migrants were protected. The Millennium Development Goals must become a reality for migrant populations living outside their countries of origin.

34. The Institute's work on gender and security sector reform had shown that unless the definition of security was reconceptualized to include the human security of women at home and in their communities, women would continue to live in situations of conflict and violence, whether or not their countries were at war.

35. The three pillars of the Organization's work — peace and security, development and human rights — would stand only if they were built on a foundation of gender equality. International commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals, viewed from a gender perspective, provided a unique opportunity to strengthen the Organization's work and consolidate its role as a major force in the empowerment of women, development, growth and progress.

36. The Institute was beginning a new era in which quality research and training for the advancement of women could expand, thereby becoming an instrument for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Precise information on the future work of INSTRAW could be found in the Report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/60/372.

37. On behalf of INSTRAW, she wished to thank all countries that had contributed to the Institute and ask those that had not yet done so to analyse the work, results and potential of the Institute and to consider the possibility of joining in sending voluntary contributions to INSTRAW at the present crucial transition moment.

38. **Mr. Neil** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that considering the progress made in the advancement of women since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, there was reason to be cautiously optimistic about the future; however, many obstacles remained. Women's advancement could only be achieved if women's health needs at basic levels were addressed. In particular, HIV/AIDS had assumed an increasingly feminine face, with the increasing number of women and girls infected with the disease surpassing their male counterparts in the incidence of new infections. Other preventable health casualties related to child-bearing, such as maternal mortality, had for too long not received the attention deserved. Another preventable, treatable medical condition was fistula, which had been referred to as the "nightmare for African women".

39. Violence against women had been one of the most degrading violations of women's basic rights and fundamental freedoms. As noted in the interim report of the Secretary-General on violence against women (A/60/211), the phenomenon persisted in epidemic proportions in all parts of the world and warranted a comprehensive examination of the root causes.

40. Poverty among women was a particular problem for many countries of the developing world and was directly related to unemployment. The globalized environment was marked by shrinking economies and a reduction of employment opportunities, forcing many women into the informal sector. Globalization was likewise marked by the increasing mobility of women, especially from developing countries. Migrant women were often vulnerable to violence, abuse and many inequities.

41. The destruction caused by recent natural disasters in Central America, particularly in Guatemala, El Salvador and Mexico, was a reminder of the negative impact of natural disasters on the social and economic well-being of people, particularly vulnerable women and children in rural areas. The report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the situation of rural women (A/60/165) included some useful recommendations which, when implemented, could help to realize the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals.

42. Gender equality targets set by Beijing and the Millennium Development Goals were indelibly linked and mutually reinforcing. Yet the Millennium Project report indicated that there was limited and uneven progress on gender equality targets. A redoubling of efforts was indicated, particularly as equality in educational opportunities was critical. The Group of 77 and China reaffirmed that while the primary responsibility for the advancement of women lay with Governments, international cooperation remained indispensable for the full implementation of Beijing. International cooperation was not only about fulfilling official development assistance (ODA) obligations; it was also about the transfer of technology, information and data sharing and technical assistance, including through South-South cooperation, to which the Group of 77 and China were fully committed.

43. The Group of 77 and China strongly supported the work of INSTRAW in its important role in the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. They had noted the new horizons being explored by the Institute in responding to the need to provide research information on some of the most topical issues for developing countries from a gender perspective, in all regions across the globe. They acknowledged the general contributions made, particularly by countries in the European Union, in maintaining the Institute, and encouraged all States to make voluntary contributions to it to assist it in executing its mandate in the area of research, particularly in its critical transitional period.

44. The Group of 77 and China acknowledged the valuable work of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in providing financial and technical assistance to developing countries to foster women's empowerment and gender equality. They also recognized the role of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women to integrate a gender perspective in United Nations activities. The Commission on the Status of Women was also especially acknowledged for its work in the follow-up to Beijing and for its ten-year review, as well as its continued commitment to ensuring that women's equal rights and empowerment continued to be pursued to full implementation.

45. **Mr. O'Neill** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries (Bulgaria and Romania), the candidate countries (Croatia and Turkey), stabilization and association process countries Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, said that 2005 had been an important year for gender equality and the advancement of women.

46. The European Union welcomed the adoption of the Declaration at the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2005 and, in particular, the full and unequivocal reaffirmation by all Member States of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Outcome at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Nevertheless, women were still denied equal rights and access to economic resources and were often the victims of violence. Women, especially girls, were disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, rendering them unable to care for the ill and orphaned. Moreover, since Beijing, there had been

a significant increase in the trafficking of women and girls, particularly for the purpose of commercial and sexual exploitation. In addition, women were often exposed to double or multiple discrimination on grounds of their ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. For all those reasons Member States were under obligation to redouble their efforts to implement the commitments of the Beijing meetings.

47. Women's issues should not be regarded in isolation and he therefore welcomed the recognition given to gender equality and the advancement of women in the discussions preceding the Millennium Summit (September 2005). The Declaration recognized that the successful promotion of development, security and human rights required the full and equal participation of women. Wherever women continued to be underrepresented in political life, or denied quality education on a par with men, they would be unable to contribute to the economic development of their communities and society as a whole would suffer. In this regard, the European Union welcomed the report of the Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality and urged Member States to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

48. Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, the international community had come to recognize not just the extent to which women and girls were particularly affected by conflict, but also how much and how often women held the key to its peaceful resolution. The European Union paid a tribute to the many civil society organizations that had brought those issues to the world's attention and urged it to implement that resolution. It hoped that the recently-established Peacebuilding Commission would demonstrate a strong commitment to implement fully resolution 1325 (2000). It was time to examine how this resolution could be better implemented at regional and national level and the European Union had begun integrating the resolutions' provisions in its crisis management operations.

49. The year 2005 marked the mid-term review of the European Union's "Lisbon strategy", adopted by the European Council in 2000, which acknowledged that gender equality and the advancement of women were essential to the achievement of full employment, sustained economic growth and social cohesion. The implementation of gender equality, however, required strong national mechanisms and international structures. In February 2005, the European Union partners had agreed to ensure that gender equality bodies and structures across the Union were equipped with the human and financial resources needed to function effectively. They also recognized that gender mainstreaming was a key strategy for achieving gender equality. They began to identify processes and tools that would encourage greater accountability when addressing gender equality issues and to improve the collection and dissemination of data, disaggregated by gender. During the second half of 2005, the European Union was focusing on women's issues in the world of work, such as unemployment, the gender pay gap, and the unequal share of the burden of unpaid labour between women and men.

50. The next year, 2006, would mark the 50th anniversary of the Commission on the Status of Women. It provided the opportunity for a constructive exchange of ideas and best practice between Member States and world experts. The discussions on the working methods of the Commission should take this into account.

51. **Mr. Mahiga** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), said that SADC associated itself with a statement made by Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. SADC upheld the principle of gender equality as a necessary and rational approach to economic growth, poverty reduction and overall human development. Quality reproductive health and other related services were made more accessible to both women and men and had become an integral part of national and regional policies designed to achieve sustainable development in the SADC region.

52. The Community reaffirmed its commitment to gender parity in all political structures and public sector institutions and had decided, at the recent SADC Summit, to raise the target of 30 per cent of women in decision-making bodies to 50 per cent, consistent with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as with the Outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

53. Gender equality was a cross-cutting issue directly linked to the attainment and enhancement of other Millennium Development Goals and the Declaration

adopted at the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which called for speedy and accelerated implementation of all international commitments relating to gender, was gratifying.

54. SADC remained committed to its 1997 Declaration on Gender and Development and the 1998 Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children. It had also ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Its member States had enacted various measures to protect the rights of women and had undertaken public education programmes on that subject. However, the conflict between traditions and statutory regulations continued to present a challenge for Member States.

55. SADC was encouraged to note that the need to develop a global policy framework for combating violence against women had been recognized. The speedy conclusion of the in-depth study on all forms of violence against women would increase much-needed public awareness on the issue.

56. It was further pleased to see increased gender sensitivity in the General Assembly, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report in his report on the follow-up to Beijing and the Platform for Action (A/60/170). It welcomed the recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General in his report but added that increased attention should be given to capacity-building with respect to gender analysis and advocacy in order to facilitate their implementation.

57. The Community also recognized the commendable work carried out by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and urged donor countries and partners to support its multi-year funding framework 2004-2007.

58. The quest for gender equality could not be achieved without addressing the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas, where most of them lived. As things stood, they were marginalized and excluded from decision-making affecting their lives and self-advancement. SADC was therefore encouraged that the General Assembly had consistently given attention to the situation of rural women and welcomed the report (A/60/165).

59. SADC noted with appreciation the technical support it received from the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and the constructive dialogue between the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the SADC member States. It reiterated its commitment to the further implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the Outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and appealed for the continued support of the international community.

60. **Ms. Al-Saleh** (Oman) said that Omani women enjoyed a wide range of civil and political freedoms founded on Islamic sharia law and civil law. In 2005 the laws and other measures had established a protective legal environment for Omani women, setting national standards in accordance with international treaties and conventions to which Oman was a State party. In May 2005, her Government had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

61. During the past few years, Oman had attained very high standards in the area of women's health, education and the labour market. Fertility rates had been reduced, family planning was practised and women had access to free birth control and counselling services in all institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Health. Women had also made extensive gains in the field of education and equal access to free education without gender discrimination was now guaranteed by law.

62. Oman's Ministry of Social Development handled all aspects of women's affairs. At the community level, however, such issues were dealt with by Omani women's associations and local community development centres.

63. On the labour front, Omani women were legally entitled to pursue the career of their choice and were active participants in social development policies. Increasing numbers of women were being appointed to high-level official positions in Government, business and the media with significant impact on the country's development policies. In 2004, Oman's first woman minister with a Cabinet portfolio was appointed as Minister of Higher Education. There were now four women ministers in the Government and two women ambassadors in the Omani diplomatic service. Oman's efforts in the advancement of women could not have been fully accomplished without the support of the UNICEF country office, to which she wished to

express appreciation. With the encouragement and support from the Government, Omani women now had equal access to health, education and employment as men. They were a vital building block of the modern Omani State and would continue to play an increasingly important role in that society.

64. **Ms. Li** Xiaomei (China), speaking on agenda items 66 and 67, said that the Chinese delegation supported the statement made by Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It believed that violence against women was currently one of the main obstacles to the full enjoyment of women's rights. At its forty-ninth session, the Commission on the Status of Women issued a Declaration on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Her delegation believed that Declaration, adopted at Beijing in August 2005 and entitled "Solidarity for Gender Equality, Development and Peace", would guide the work of the United Nations in future.

65. It was encouraging that in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, Heads of State had agreed unanimously that progress for women was progress for all and had committed themselves to taking measures to promote gender equality and eliminate gender-based discrimination.

66. The future of women depended on the implementation of Beijing+10 and the Plan of Action. The United Nations should build upon the momentum of the tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference and work to achieve such goals as: eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls; stepping up efforts to eradicate poverty among women; guaranteeing women full participation in political, economic and social decision-making; accelerating the achievement of universal education; ensuring that women enjoyed quality health care and acquired knowledge and means for preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS; and promoting the equal participation of women in peacekeeping activities. It should also implement policies aimed at mainstreaming gender perspectives; pay special attention to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of women; pay attention to the gender identity of men in society; create an international environment of peace and solidarity favourable to the development of women; and respect the right of countries to choose, within the international framework, their own distinctive approach to advance the cause of women.

67. **Mr. Afifi** (Egypt) said that his Government had adopted an ambitious approach to equal treatment of men and women eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. It was, for instance, introducing a strategy to empower women politically, economically and socially. One of the first steps it had taken to implement the Outcome of the Fourth World Conference was to create the National Council for Women to evaluate and monitor programmes and policies seeking to empower women. The Council had been successful in integrating gender issues into the national plan for social and economic development for 2002-2007, thus enabling women to participate fully in the development process and to eliminate gender disparities. As a consequence, investments in programmes supporting women's issues had dramatically increased. Under the new five-year plan, investments devoted to women and small enterprises had doubled compared to the previous plan. There had also been an increase in family projects to empower women so that they might improve their family income.

68. In the area of education, the Government had been able to increase the ratio of females to males in primary and secondary education; females in public education now accounted for 54 per cent of total students and 49 per cent of those in university. It had also created new educational establishments with the involvement of both the public and private sectors. Enrolment in educational institutions had increased considerably, especially in rural areas. There had also been a considerable decrease in the dropout rate among women.

69. In Egypt, the participation of women had increased in all areas of public life, especially in high positions. There were now 14 members of Parliament, a woman judge and 35 women ambassadors.

70. The Government had cooperated with the National Council of Women to review all laws concerning women to bring them in line with its international commitments. All legislation that embodied discrimination between women and men had been abrogated such as that pertaining to the right of women to travel abroad, divorce and marriage rights.

71. The reference in the Report of the Committee (A/60/38) regarding Palestinian pregnant women and their mistreatment at Israeli checkpoints reaffirmed the importance of ending the inhumane practices against

the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation. As a provisional arrangement, the United Nations should endeavour to undertake to protect Palestinian women in the occupied area.

72. Egypt had participated in the resolution that initiated the study on all forms of violence against women. It stressed the importance of monitoring this phenomenon and of preparing future strategies to combat it.

73. **Ms. Warif-Halabi** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the aim of enabling and empowering women was to develop their individuality, abilities and effectiveness. Success in that endeavour was measured by women's participation in political and economic affairs and by the resources devoted to women's issues. The Syrian Arab Republic, guided by the Beijing Platform for Action and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, was working to strengthen women's roles by removing obstacles to their participation in political and public life and by making them part of the sustainable development effort.

74. Government policies had borne fruit, with gender parity improved in primary, secondary and vocational education between 1990 and 2004 and targets for the education of girls exceeded in some cases. While women had held 6.9 per cent of parliamentary seats in the fifth parliament, they held 12 per cent of seats in the twelfth parliament. The economic advancement of women had been included among the goals of the five-year plan covering 2001 to 2005. Legislation had been enacted to eliminate discrimination against women in access to credit, including mortgage loans. Health and safety legislation applying to employment treated men and women equally. To improve women entrepreneurs' visibility and representation, including representation abroad, chambers of commerce were providing services specifically for their benefit.

75. The Syrian Institute for family affairs was consistently working to improve living conditions for women. Recalling that the Beijing Platform for Action had included targets regarding women in occupied areas, her delegation pointed out that women's organizations in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to monitor the situation of women in the Golan and in occupied Palestinian lands and to call for an end to the occupation.

76. **Mr. Chaudhry** (Pakistan) said that, despite greater awareness of gender issues, and despite the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Millennium Development Goals centred on women and the establishment of the International Criminal Court, the situation of the world's women remained grim. They continued to account for a disproportionate number of victims of poverty, violence and physical and psychological abuse, in almost equal measure in developed and developing countries, and irrespective of their religious or cultural environment.

77. The advancement of women was an international responsibility requiring cooperation and collaboration. It was a cross-cutting issue, affecting development, human rights, democracy and education. The plight of women in rural areas, conflict situations and territories under foreign occupation, and the situation of migrant and trafficked women must be given top priority. Women in general continued to suffer discrimination and exclusion and unequal access to resources and opportunities.

78. As a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and to major International Labour Organization regional conventions, Pakistan was committed to changing the lives of millions of its women. The problems they faced in Pakistani society existed in other societies, including those of developed countries; they were often attributable to illiteracy and primitive traditions. The Government addressed gender issues on the political, economic, social and legal fronts, and the last ten years had brought progress.

79. Pakistan had more women representatives in national, provincial and local government than any other Asian country. There was an adequate number of women ministers in the federal and provincial governments. Women's Political Schools were training women for public office. The country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) incorporated the gender perspective, and women were able to finance income-generating projects using a variety of microcredit facilities.

80. A Women's Health Project focused on improving the health, nutrition and social status of women and girls. Crisis centres provided temporary shelter, free legal aid, medical attention and counselling to women in distress. In 2004, a Bill had been put forward to ensure that all perpetrators of honour killings were

tried. The Government had encouraged serious debate of the Hudood laws.

81. **Ms. Assoumou** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that Côte d'Ivoire, aware of women's role in economic and social development, ensured that it was represented at all international meetings on women's issues. It reaffirmed its commitment to international instruments on those issues, and to the documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and had enshrined the principle of gender equality in its July 2000 Constitution. That document also banned all physical and psychological violence, mutilation, early or forced marriage and sexual harassment.

82. The Government had appointed women to senior positions and ensured that posts in the army, the police and central administration traditionally held by men were open to women. The National Health Development Plan (PNDS) for 1996 to 2005 had reduced mother and child mortality and women had been made responsible for maintaining village water supply infrastructure. Primary school fees and uniforms had been abolished and school books were supplied free, generating an increase in girls' school attendance. Literacy programmes for rural areas had specifically targeted women. The National Population Action Plan for 2002 to 2006 aimed to increase women's economic power. New legislation had paved the way for mutual savings and loan mechanisms targeted at women, and the country's various social funds supported entrepreneurial ventures by women.

83. The Government was aware that it had much work to do to fulfil its Beijing commitments, but the crisis which had begun in September 2002 had seriously hampered efforts to tackle poverty among women. One of the new challenges was to improve women's ability to play a part in conflict resolution.

84. **Ms. Al-Muzaini** (Kuwait) said that the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women, which was the result of the first ever General Assembly mandate for a study on the subject, would help to provide a benchmark for future action. All discrimination against women stood in the way of equity, equality and justice, principles which Kuwait had enshrined in its Constitution. Kuwait had acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1994, incorporating the Convention into its national law. It had submitted two reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and a combined third and fourth report was in preparation.

85. In May 2005, the Kuwaiti parliament had amended the Electoral Act to enable women to participate in parliamentary elections for the first time. Kuwait would accordingly withdraw its reservation to Article 7, paragraph (a) of the Convention. Women had been appointed to cabinet-level positions in the Government and occupied more and more leadership positions, especially in municipal authorities.

86. Women could contribute to development and serve society through means other than remunerated labour. They played a central and growing role in civil society. The Kuwaiti Federation of Women, founded in 1994, sought to expand women's participation in social and volunteer work, and their representation in international conferences. Women's issues were also monitored by bodies such as the Kuwait Bar Association.

87. Kuwait had adopted mechanisms to protect women's rights and fundamental freedoms and to prevent violence against them, especially in the workplace. The Division for Family and Women's Affairs of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour sought to improve women's awareness of their rights and to improve their situation. All public- and private-sector efforts in that regard were based on the values of Kuwaiti society and the teachings of Islam.

88. **Ms. Van den Brink** (the Netherlands) said that violence against women, particularly domestic violence, was a fact of life all over the world and as serious a cause of incapacity and death as cancer. All women were potential victims, regardless of their culture, religion or ideology, age, or social or economic status. Moreover, when women became victims, their children became victims too. Because true safety for adults and children began in the family environment, the cycle of domestic violence must be stopped. United Nations action on that front had included the appointment of Ms. Yakin Ertürk as Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences.

89. The Netherlands, with its long experience of discussing and combating domestic violence realized that legal and policy measures could not be effective unless victims were given care and support and unless the subject was publicly debated. If it was surrounded by secrecy, change would be difficult. The message

must be that domestic violence was intolerable and must be fought in every possible way.

90. Her delegation believed that combating domestic violence required other forms of action. The first requirement was more research, statistics and documentation. Despite the problems of underreporting by victims and under-recording by police and judicial authorities, it would be impossible to measure success without facts and figures. The second requirement was to recognize that domestic violence was neither a private matter nor an excusable way of maintaining family discipline, but a threat to economic development and welfare. The Millennium Development Goals could not be achieved without eradicating domestic violence, if only because of the cost of coping with the phenomenon.

91. The third requirement was continued empowerment of women, so that they could take control of their own lives and bodies. Without such an approach, increased awareness of victimization could have the positive effect of creating empathy and understanding, but the negative effect of reinforcing stereotypes of women as helpless. The fourth requirement was recognition that domestic violence could not be counselled, policed or legislated out of existence. It was not just a women's issue, and men must be involved in combating it. The fifth requirement was more focus on enforcement of legislation, and an end to laws which emphasized family reunification over the rights of women and girls.

92. **Ms. Strauss** (International Organization for Migration (IOM)), speaking on agenda item 64, said that many misperceptions surrounded violence against migrants and the problem of trafficking. The first was that all traffickers were men; in fact, almost one third were women, many of them trafficking victims themselves. The second was that only women were victims of trafficking; in fact, the number of men and children involved had increased. The third was that the sole purpose of trafficking in human beings was sexual exploitation; in fact, many people were trafficked to work, beg or steal.

93. While trafficking must remain high on the agenda of human rights and migration issues, female migrants must not be stigmatized. Migration could empower and emancipate women, and provide financial independence abroad and better status at home.

94. Trafficking within countries had become commonplace, challenging the usual definition of the phenomenon. While most Governments were willing to tackle international trafficking, few had recognized the specific challenge of trafficking within their borders. Without adequate assistance to tackle all forms of trafficking, victims were likely to be trafficked again.

95. Migrant women were particularly likely to suffer violence. Because the gender dimension had not been mainstreamed into migration matters, it was not well known that half of the 200 million international migrants were female. Although violence was often thought to be more common in specific groups, in fact it transcended societies, cultures, geographical regions and the passage of time. Women who left their countries of origin for better living conditions often worked in appalling conditions, and were more likely than men to be exposed to forced labour, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution and other violence. They were also more likely than men to accept hazardous working environments and low pay. Many were not well-informed about combating sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

96. Migrant women's countries of origin and countries of destination must define clear measures to promote and protect the human rights and dignity of female migrants and maximize the benefits of their presence. Although a number of countries had enacted legislation and developed national strategies against violence, fewer than 20 per cent of the Organization's Member States were party to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.